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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/577,916	05/01/2006	Ryoji Funahashi	062440	6898
38834 7590 10/14/2009 WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP 1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW SUITE 700 WASHINGTON, DC 20036				
EXAMINER TAL XIUNTU				
ART UNIT 1795		PAPER NUMBER		
NOTIFICATION DATE 10/14/2009		DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC		

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

patentmail@whda.com

**Office Action Summary****Application No.**

10/577,916

**Applicant(s)**

FUNAHASHI, RYOJI

**Examiner**

Xiuyu Tai

**Art Unit**

1795

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 June 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-6 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Response to Arguments*

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-6 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection necessitated by applicant's amendments.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ariafard et al ("Hydrogen peroxide decomposition over  $\text{La}_{0.9}\text{Sr}_{0.1}\text{Ni}_{1-x}\text{Cr}_x\text{O}_3$  ( $0 < x < 1$ ) pervoskites", Catalysis Communications, 4 (2003) 561-566).
4. Regarding claim 1, Ariafard et al disclose mixed oxides of  $\text{La}_{0.9}\text{Sr}_{0.1}\text{Ni}_{1-x}\text{Cr}_x\text{O}_3$  ( $0 < x < 1$ ) (ABSTRACT, Table1 on page 563). The disclosed composition satisfies the formula cited in the instant claim. The reference is silent about whether this composite oxide has a negative Seebeck coefficient at 100C or higher. However, since the composition of Ariafard meets the formula cited in the claim, it is inherent to have the same properties as the claimed oxide, particularly the Seebeck coefficient.
5. Regarding claim 2, Ariafard et al disclose mixed oxides of  $\text{La}_{0.9}\text{Sr}_{0.1}\text{Ni}_{1-x}\text{Cr}_x\text{O}_3$  ( $0 < x < 1$ ) (ABSTRACT). The disclosed composition satisfies the formula cited in the instant claim. The reference is silent about whether this composite oxide has an electrical resistivity of 10 or less at 100C or higher. However, since the composition of

Ariafard meets the formula cited in the claim, it is inherent to have the same properties as the claimed oxide, particularly the electrical resistivity.

6. Regarding claims 3 and 4, Ariafard does not indicate whether the composition is an n-type thermoelectric material. However, since the composition of Ariafard meets the formula cited in the claim, it is fully capable of functioning as an n-type thermoelectric material.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

9. Claims 5 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ariafard et al as applied to claims 3 and 4, above, and further in view of Funahashi et al (JP 2001-064021, cited in IDS).

10. Regarding claims 5 and 6, Ariafard does not teach a thermoelectric module comprising the claimed structures. However, Funahashi et al disclose a complex oxide

and a thermoelectric element using the oxide as a thermoelectric conversion material. The thermoelectric element comprises a substrate 1 for hot section (i.e. high-temperature side substrate), a substrate 2 for low temperature part (i.e. a low temperature side substrate), a p-type thermoelectric conversion material 3, a N-type thermoelectric conversion material 4, electrode 5, and lead 6 (DRAWING3, paragraph [0020]). The composition of Ariafard meets the formula cited in the claims 3 and 4 and is fully capable of functioning as an n-type thermoelectric material. Therefore, one having ordinary skill in the art would have found it obvious to substitute the N-type thermoelectric material of Ariafard for that of Funahashi because they are both N-type materials.

### ***Conclusion***

11. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Xiuyu Tai whose telephone number is 571-270-1855. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jennifer Michener can be reached on 571-272-1424. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/X. T./  
Examiner, Art Unit 1795  
/Jennifer K. Michener/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 1795